

THE DIRECTOR OF  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

National Intelligence Council

8 June 1983

NOTE FOR: DDI

FROM : Vice Chairman, NIC

Here is the cable I mentioned on Gorbachev's visit to Canada. Your people have obviously done a fine job in putting this together. I would give anything to know what flashes through the mind of a Politburo member with responsibility for Soviet agriculture who, on his first visit to the West, wanders through a supermarket.



Herbert E. Meyer

Att: a/s

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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: PINR, PGOV, PREL, EAGR, US, CA  
SUBJECT: POLITBURO MEMBER GORBACHEV'S VISIT TO CANADA

REF: (A) OTTAWA 3902, (B) OTTAWA 3996, (C) OTTAWA 4118

1. (S) - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: CANADIAN OFFICIALS INVOLVED WITH THE MAY 16-23 GORBACHEV VISIT HAVE PROVIDED US WITH AN INITIAL READOUT OF THE TRIP DURING A GENERAL DEBRIEFING AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND IN SEVERAL INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS. THE CANADIANS SEEM GENUINELY PLEASED WITH THE WAY THE TRIP WENT AND WERE PERHAPS EVEN FLATTERED BY THE HIGH LEVEL REPRESENTATION. THEY WERE IMPRESSED WITH GORBACHEV'S BEARING AND KNOWLEDGE. THE SOVIETS, IN TURN, WERE KEEN ON GIVING GORBACHEV SOME EXPOSURE TO THE WEST AND GORBACHEV HIMSELF WAS A CLOSELY INTERESTED OBSERVER OF THE CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL COMPLEX. GORBACHEV HEWED CLOSELY TO THE SOVIET LINE ON FOREIGN POLICY IN BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE REMARKS. HE CARRIED A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM GENERAL SECRETARY ANDROPOV FOR PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU (REF C). BECAUSE OF THE HIGH INTEREST IN SOVIET LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES WE HAVE INCLUDED MANY DETAILS ABOUT GORBACHEV THE MAN AND HIS RESPONSIBILITIES THAT THE CANADIANS SHARED WITH US. SOME OF THE MORE INTRIGUING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ANDROPOV REGIME THAT GORBACHEV MIGHT HAVE SHED SOME LIGHT ON, HOWEVER, WERE NOT BROACHED. END SUMMARY.

3. WE PROVIDE IN THIS CABLE AN OVERVIEW OF THE GORBACHEV VISIT PREPARED BY A WASHINGTON-BASED ANALYST AND INCLUDING EMBASSY INPUT. (SEE REFTELS FOR ADDITIONAL EMBASSY REPORTS.) THE GORBACHEV VISIT HAD ITS ORIGINS IN AN OCTOBER 1981 VISIT TO THE USSR BY AGRICULTURE MINISTER WHELAN. GORBACHEV AND WHELAN MET AT THAT TIME AND AN EXTERNAL OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT THE SOVIETS HAD PROPOSED GORBACHEV VISIT CANADA IN 1982. THE CANADIANS SENT AN INVITATION TO GORBACHEV THROUGH SOVIET "PARLIAMENTARIANS" SHITIKOV AND RUBEN. THE VISIT WAS FIRMED UP EARLY THIS YEAR. ACCORDING TO AN EXTERNAL OFFICIAL, GORBACHEV WAS NOT PROMISED A MEETING WITH TRUDEAU IN ADVANCE. THE CANADIANS WERE NOT GIVEN A

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SPECIFIC REASON FOR THE LAST MINUTE CURTAILMENT OF THE GORBACHEV VISIT. ONE EXTERNAL OFFICIAL SAID THAT HE WAS TOLD THAT GORBACHEV WAS NEEDED BACK IN MOSCOW TO "CHAIR" MEETINGS OF THE PARTY SECRETARIAT WHILE CHERNENKO WAS "BUSY" (COMMENT: THIS OFFICIAL DID NOT REPEAT THIS REMARK IN ANOTHER FORUM AND WE ARE NOT CONFIDENT THAT IN SPEAKING TO US THE FIRST TIME WITHOUT HIS NOTES HE WAS ACCURATE). A MORE SENIOR EXTERNAL OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT GORBACHEV HAD A LOT OF WORK BACK HOME. THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN OTTAWA REPORTEDLY RECEIVED A LENGTHY CABLE FROM MOSCOW EXPLAINING WHY THE TRIP WAS BEING CUT SHORT BUT DID NOT SHARE THE INFORMATION WITH THEIR CANADIAN HOSTS.

4. GORBACHEV MET WITH TRUDEAU FOR ABOUT AN HOUR AND A HALF ON THE MORNING OF MAY 18 AND DURING A LUNCHEON HOSTED BY THE PRIME MINISTER WHO WAS SITTING IN FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTER MACEACHEN WHO HAD BEEN TAKEN ILL. THE CANADIAN NOTETAKER DURING THE LUNCHEON SESSION TOLD US THE CONVERSATION STARTED OUT WITH A SIMPLE EXCHANGE OF PLEASANTRIES BUT QUICKLY TURNED INTO A FRANK EXCHANGE OF VIEWS THAT BECAME "INTENSE" AND FOCUSED LARGELY ON U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY NUCLEAR ARMS ISSUES (SEE REFTEL C FOR DETAILED REPORT).

5. GORBACHEV ALSO MET PRIVATELY WITH PARLIMENTARY OPPOSITION LEADERS. THE SESSION WITH INTERIM TORY LEADER ERIK NEILSEN WAS NOTABLE ONLY FOR THE HARDLINE FOREIGN POLICY VIEWS EXPRESSED BY NEILSEN. ONE EXTERNAL OFFICIAL TOLD US THAT THE TORIES INTENDED TO BOYCOTT THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION BEFORE A JOINT SESSION OF THE COMMONS' STANDING COMMITTEE ON EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE WITH THE SENATE COMMITTEE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND ONLY CHANGED THEIR STANCE AT THE LAST MINUTE (REFTEL A). NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER BROADBENT'S QUESTIONS, ACCORDING TO ONE EXTERNAL OFFICIAL PRESENT, TESTED GORBACHEV BUT HE MAINTAINED HIS COMPOSURE ESPECIALLY DURING AN ARGUMENT OVER CRUISE MISSILES. GORBACHEV AT ONE POINT SAID "I CANNOT STATE WHETHER WE HAVE CRUISE MISSILES," WHEN ASKED POINT BLANK WHETHER THE USSR HAS THESE WEAPONS. (COMMENT: EXTAFF OBSERVED NDP LEADER BROADBENT WAS LIKELY IRRITATED BY GORBACHEV'S FAILURE TO PROVIDE INFORMATION THAT MIGHT HAVE BOLSTERED NDP EFFORTS IN OPPOSING THE PROPOSED TESTING HERE BY THE U.S. OF THE AIR-LAUNCHED CRUISE MISSILE WHICH HAS BECOME A CENTRAL ISSUE IN THE

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CANADIAN ANTI-NUCLEAR MOVEMENT.)

6. DURING HIS FAST-PACED TOUR OF CANADIAN AGRICULTURAL AND RELATED LIGHT INDUSTRIAL FACILITIES, GORBACHEV EVINced KEEN INTEREST IN LABOR PRODUCTIVITY, FARM MANAGEMENT AND WORKER INCENTIVES, FOOD STORAGE (PARTICULARLY ON-SITE FARM STORAGE FACILITIES), PACKAGING, AND DISTRIBUTION. HE WAS ALSO INTERESTED IN ZERO TILLAGE: A PROCESS DESIGNED TO COPE WITH SALINITY IN THE SOIL WHICH IS CONSIDERED BY CANADIANS TO BE AN EQUALLY SERIOUS PROBLEM IN THE SOVIET UNION. GORBACHEV USED SOVIET STATISTICS ON AGRICULTURE SELECTIVELY TO PUT THE BEST LIGHT ON THE SITUATION IN THE USSR. HOWEVER, IN PRIVATE GORBACHEV REPORTEDLY REMARKED TO CANADIAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE THAT IN CERTAIN ASPECTS OF FARMING, "WE ARE NOT EVEN CLOSE." GORBACHEV STATED AT THE OUTSET THAT HE WAS IN CANADA TO COMPARE ITS AGRICULTURAL EXPERIENCE TO WHAT THE SOVIETS ARE DOING IN THE FOOD PROGRAM ANNOUNCED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE IN MAY 1981. GORBACHEV WAS

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OBVIOUSLY WELL BRIEFED ON CANADIAN AGRICULTURE AND WAS EVEN ABLE TO QUOTE FROM WHELAN'S 1981 AGRO-FOOD PROGRAM FOR CANADA (CANADIANS WERE TOLD THAT THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO RUSSIAN). GENERALLY GORBACHEV SEEMED SINGULARLY IMPRESSED BY THE EFFICIENCY OF THE FARMS, PROCESSING AND PACKAGING PLANTS HE VISITED. EARLY IN THE TOUR HE EVINCE GENUINE SURPRISE THAT SO FEW COULD FARM, OR PRODUCE SO MUCH AND REPEATEDLY QUESTIONED FARMERS/WORKERS CLOSELY ON HOW MANY LABORERS WORKED WITH THEM. SIMILARLY GORBACHEV SEEMED IMPRESSED BY THE ABUNDANCE, QUALITY AND ESPECIALLY THE PACKAGING OF FOOD AT A SUPER-MARKET SHOWN HIM.

7. GORBACHEV DID NOT REVEAL MUCH ABOUT SOVIET AGRICULTURE DURING THE TRIP. HE DID TALK ABOUT THE BRIGADE SYSTEM -- AN ARRANGEMENT THAT IS DESIGNED TO GIVE MORE INITIATIVE TO RELATIVELY SMALL GROUPS OF FARM WORKERS -- AND INDICATED THAT AN AREA OF TWO TO THREE THOUSAND HECTARES WOULD BE FARMED BY A BRIGADE. GORBACHEV ALSO TOLD CANADIAN OFFICIALS THAT ABOUT 14 PERCENT OF SOVIET STATE FARMS AND KOLKHOZES NOW EMPLOY THE BRIGADE SYSTEM AND SAID BY THE END OF 1983 THE PERCENTAGE WOULD GROW TO 20 PERCENT. THE SOVIET OFFICIAL ALSO SAID THE LEADERSHIP WAS FOCUSING ON THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF FARMING-- STORAGE, PROCUREMENT, AND TRANSPORT, AN INTEREST THAT WAS READILY APPARENT FROM HIS PATTERN OF "SEARCHING" AND KNOWLEDGEABLE QUESTIONS THROUGHOUT HIS TOUR. GORBACHEV SAID THAT OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS INVESTMENT IN AGRICULTURE WOULD AMOUNT TO FIVE HUNDRED BILLION RUBLES. WHILE NO SPECIFIC TRANSACTIONS WERE DISCUSSED, GORBACHEV EXPRESSED INTEREST IN MEAT PROCESSING MACHINERY -- AND HIS CO-DELEGATES DETAILED NOTING OF MODEL NUMBERS FROM I.D. PLATES ON MACHINES -- SUGGESTED TO THE CANADIANS THERE MAY BE SOME SOVIET PURCHASES IN THIS AREA. THE CANADIANS INSIST THAT NO SPECIFIC DISCUSSIONS OF POSSIBLE NEW SOVIET GRAIN PURCHASES WERE CONDUCTED DURING THE VISIT, ALTHOUGH GORBACHEV SEVERAL TIMES RAISED THE SOVIETS' CONTINUING CONCERN OVER THE IMBALANCE OF SOVIET-CANADIAN TRADE (REF C).

8. GORBACHEV INDICATED HE OVERSEES FIFTEEN SOVIET MINISTRIES, 300,000 KILOMETERS OF RURAL ROADS, AND IS RESPONSIBLE FOR 43 PERCENT OF THE GNP. HIS PORTFOLIO INCLUDES AGRICULTURAL INPUTS AND OUTPUTS, FISHING, FARM EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLY, AND TRANSPORTATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE. CANADIANS WERE QUITE IMPRESSED WITH GORBACHEV'S KNOWLEDGE OF FARMING -- HE BEGAN WORK AS A COMBINE OPERATOR WHEN HE WAS 15 YEARS OLD.

9. GORBACHEV INDICATED TO HIS CANADIAN HOSTS THAT HE HAS WORKED FROM 0900 - 2100 EACH DAY, INCLUDING SATURDAYS SINCE BECOMING A POLITBURO MEMBER. HE REPORTEDLY WORKS ON POLITBURO MATTERS ON SATURDAY. SUNDAYS HE SPENDS AT HOME WITH HIS FAMILY. GORBACHEV IS MARRIED, HIS WIFE IS A PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY AT MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY (SHE WAS INVITED TO CANADA BUT DECLINED BECAUSE OF COMMITMENTS IN MOSCOW). GORBACHEV'S REMARKS TO CANADIAN OFFICIALS SUGGESTED A STRONG ATTACHMENT TO HIS FAMILY AND HE SHOWED MUCH WARMTH TOWARD WOMEN AND CHILDREN WHILE IN CANADA. GORBACHEV HAS A DAUGHTER WHO IS MARRIED TO AN ENGINEER AND A GRANDDAUGHTER ON WHOM HE APPARENTLY DOTES. HE HAS A STATE DACHA IN THE MOSCOW AREA AND VACATIONS IN THE CAUCASUS, WHERE HIS MOTHER LIVES.

10. GORBACHEV WAS UNIVERSALLY DESCRIBED BY HIS CANADIAN CONTACTS AS BRIGHT, COMPETENT, AND EXUDING GREAT SELF-

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CONFIDENCE AND COMPOSURE. HE WAS REPORTEDLY ALWAYS CLEARLY IN COMMAND OF HIS DELEGATION OF SIX WHO KEPT SILENT UNLESS DIRECTLY INVITED TO SPEAK BY GORBACHEV THROUGHOUT THE TOUR. HE HAS A SENSE OF HUMOR, IS URBANE AND LOOKS YOU STRAIGHT IN THE EYES WHEN SPEAKING TO YOU. GORBACHEV WAS SUMMED UP BY HIS CANADIAN ESCORTS AS A CONSUMMATE "POLITICIAN," A JUDGEMENT SIMILARLY MADE WITH GRUDGING ADMIRATION BY A TORY MP (REFTEL A). WE NOTE GORBACHEV READILY TOOK THE INITIATIVE TO SHAKE HANDS AND EVEN KISS BABIES ON THOSE OCCASIONS WHEN HIS TOUR BROUGHT HIM INTO CONTACT WITH ORDINARY CANADIANS. HIS FAVORITE HOBBY IS READING. HE LIKES RUSSIAN LITERATURE, POETRY AND CLASSICAL MUSIC. GORBACHEV SPEAKS RUSSIAN AND UKRAINIAN BUT APPARENTLY NO ENGLISH. HE LOOKS FIT, ALTHOUGH HE WAS DESCRIBED AS SLIGHTLY OVERWEIGHT (HE WAS DESCRIBED AS STANDING FIVE FEET SIX ALTHOUGH WE AND EXTAFF WOULD PUT HIM AT ABOUT 5 FEET EIGHT OR A BIT MORE, AND WEIGHS ABOUT 175 POUNDS). HE REPORTEDLY LIKES TO WALK OR JOG, BUT DID NEITHER, AND DECLINED AN INVITATION TO GO SWIMMING, WHILE ON TOUR IN CANADA. HE EATS AND DRINKS IN MODERATION (GORBACHEV LIKES DAIRY PRODUCTS BUT HE ATE EVERYTHING OFFERED HIM WHILE IN CANADA). GORBACHEV DID NOT SMOKE DURING HIS VISIT, HE INDICATED A DISLIKE OF VODKA BUT DID DRINK WINE IN MODERATION. DURING THE HECTIC PACE IN CANADA GORBACHEV WOULD RESERVE A SHORT PERIOD (45 MINUTES TO AN HOUR) AT THE END OF THE DAY TO TAKE A WALK AND "TO CLEAR HIS HEAD." SOVIET AMBASSADOR YAKOVLEV USUALLY ACCOMPANIED HIM ON THESE WALKS. WE NOTE THAT GORBACHEV IMPRESSED ONE OF HIS CANADIAN ESCORTS AS SOMEWHAT OF A "ROMANTIC" BECUASE GORBACHEV WAS MOVED, VISIBLY AND VERBALLY, BY THE BEAUTY OF LANDSCAPES, SUNRISES AND SUNSETS HE SAW.

11. CANADIAN HOSTS WERE PRIMED TO ASK GORBACHEV ABOUT HIS RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE POLITBURO AND SECRETARIAT AND HIS RELATIONSHIP TO ANDROPOV AND OTHERS, BUT HE WOULD NOT BE DRAWN OUT ON ANY ASPECT OF KREMLIN POLITICS. ACCORDING TO ONE WELL PLACED MEMBER OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION, THE CANADIANS PROBED FOR THREE DAYS RUNNING ON LEADERSHIP TOPICS BUT DROPPED THAT LINE OF QUESTIONING WHEN THE POINT THAT "WE DO NOT TALK ABOUT SUCH THINGS" HAD BEEN MADE TO THEM. WHEN QUERIED AS TO WHETHER THE SOVIET OFFICIAL MENTIONED ANYONE ELSE IN THE TOP LEADERSHIP, TWO CANADIAN ESCORTS DID REPORT THAT GORBACHEV MENTIONED GEYDAR ALIYEV, A POLITBURO MEMBER AND FIRST DEPUTY PREMIER. ONE OFFICIAL SAID GORBACHEV INDICATED THAT ALIYEV WAS IN CHARGE WHEN ANDROPOV WAS ABSENT WHILE THE SECOND OFFICIAL BELIEVES THAT GORBACHEV SAID SOMETHING TO THE EFFECT THAT ALIYEV WAS OF ASSISTANCE TO ANDROPOV. (COMMENT: BOTH CANADIAN OFFICIALS WERE LESS THAT CERTAIN OF WHAT THEY HAD HEARD AND IN WHAT CONTEXT THEY HEARD IT. IT SEEMED THAT ALIYEV'S NAME MAY HAVE COME UP IN A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, OF WHICH ALIYEV IS A FIRST DEPUTY CHAIRMAN OR PREMIER. BECAUSE THE CANADIANS WERE QUITE IMPRECISE ON THIS WE CAUTION AGAINST DRAWING TOO MUCH FROM IT.) FOLLOWING AN ENCOUNTER WITH THE YOUTHFUL ONTARIO PROVINCIAL MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, GORBACHEV PRIVATELY TOLD HIS CANADIAN ESCORTS THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A MIX OF YOUNG AND OLD IN LEADERSHIP CIRCLES, AND PERHAPS IN REACTION TO THE BRASH CANADIAN OFFICIAL'S REMARKS, SAID THAT AS THE YOUNGEST MEMBER OF THE POLITBURO HE IS ONLY NOW BEGINNING TO GIVE ADVICE TO THE OTHERS.

12. MISCELLANY. GORBACHEV WAS PROTECTED BY FIVE SECURITY MEN, INCLUDING HIS NORMAL COMPLEMENT OF THREE KGB BODYGUARDS. THE BODYGUARDS, DESPITE EFFORTS TO THE CONTRARY, ASSERTEDLY WERE NOT ARMED WHILE IN CANADA ALTHOUGH EXTAFF

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SUGGESTED THAT THE CANADIANS HAD ACCEPTED, WITHOUT OTHER-WISE VERIFYING, SOVIET PROMISES TO OBSERVE THE GOC'S TRADITIONAL PROHIBITION OF THE CARRYING OF FIREARMS BY FOREIGN SECURITY PERSONNEL FOR VISITING VIP'S. CANADIANS DESCRIBED THE SECURITY FOR GORBACHEV AS PROFESSIONAL, NOT HEAVY HANDED. WHEN THE DELEGATION WENT TO NIAGARA FALLS THERE WERE NO EXTRAORDINARY SECURITY MEASURES TAKEN. GORBACHEV'S VISIT, ON AN HOUR'S NOTICE, TO A MODERN FOOD STORE IN THE NIAGARA AREA, CAUSED NO PROBLEM FOR SOVIET SECURITY PERSONNEL. AT TIMES GORBACHEV TRAVELED BY BUS AND FOR RATHER LONG TIMES HE WAS ON CANADIAN AIRCRAFT. ONCE HE LEFT OTTAWA WHERE HE HAD ACCESS TO THE SOVIET EMBASSY, CANADIAN OBSERVERS WERE UNAWARE OF ANY SPECIAL COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT THAT ACCOMPANIED THE POLITBURO MEMBER (IN WINDSOR, ONTARIO HE SPENT THE NIGHT AT THE LOCAL HOLIDAY INN). WHILE THE DELEGATION WAS IN BANFF

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THERE WAS A SMALL AND ORDERLY DEMONSTRATION WITH SIGNS IN RUSSIAN AS WELL AS ENGLISH. GORBACHEV SEEMED SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE AND IRRITATED IN THE SITUATION BUT NO MORE SO THAT HIS HOST, AGRICULTURE MINISTER WHELAN. THE ONLY OTHER OCCASION WHEN HE SEEMED VISIBLY IRRITATED ON HIS PROVINCIAL ITINERARY, WE WERE TOLD, WAS WHEN REPORTERS ASKED GORBACHEV ABOUT HIS POLITICAL AMBITIONS; A QUESTION THAT ELICITED A "DISDAINFUL GLARE."

13. GORBACHEV WAS NOT ISOLATED FROM THE CANADIANS DURING A FIVE HOUR FLIGHT FROM TORONTO TO CALGARY. HE TALKED WITH WHELAN AND WITH THE LATTER'S ASSISTANTS (MOSTLY ON GENERAL TOPICS AND PLEASANTRIES). A PHYSICIAN ACCOMPANIED GORBACHEV BUT THE CANADIANS INDICATED THAT HE WAS THERE ONLY AS A CONTINGENCY. GORBACHEV TOOK NO MEDICATIONS AS FAR AS CANADIANS COULD TELL EXCEPT FOR SLEEPING AIDES BY INJECTION FOR THE FIRST TWO NIGHTS IN CANADA. GORBACHEV TRAVELED VERY WELL THROUGHOUT AND ALWAYS EMERGED IN THE MORNING QUITE RESTED. ON SOME LATE NIGHTS -- ONE IN THE MORNING OR SO -- HE WOULD CALL IT QUILTS, BUT EVERYONE ELSE WAS ALSO TIRED BY THAT TIME. THE POLITBURO MEMBER WAS ALSO OBSERVED ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS -- WITH THE HELP OF HIS INTERPRETER -- PERUSING THE WEEKLY ILLUSTRATED TELEVISION GUIDE.  
ROBINSON  
END OF MESSAGE

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